

**SUMMER MEETING OF WILTON PARK ACADEMIC COUNCIL (WPAC)  
THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2005 – WISTON HOUSE**

**Present:**

**Wilton Park Academic Council:**

Dr Farham Nizami	Director, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies
Professor Victor Bulmer-Thomas	Director, Chatham House
Lord Corbett of Castle Vale	Labour Party parliamentary representative
Dr Ray Cunningham	Director, Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society
Mr Nik Gowing	Journalist and broadcaster
Mr Janusz Heath	Former Managing Director, Allianz Specialised Investments
Sir Michael Quinlan	Former Director, The Ditchley Foundation
Lord Young of Norwood Green	Trade Union Liaison Officer, Ethical Trading Initiative

**FCO:**

Peter Hill,	Head, Policy Team, Directorate of Strategy & Information (DSI)
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**Wilton Park:**

Colin Jennings	Chief Executive
Nick Hopkinson	Deputy Director
Robin Hart	Associate Director
Chris Langdon	Associate Director
Roger Williamson	Associate Director
Isobelle Jaques	Associate Director
Adela Gooch	Associate Director
Klaus Becher	Associate Director
Julia Purcell	Associate Director
Jane Rawbone [Note-taker]	PA/Chief Executive

**ACTION POINTS**

- a) Wilton Park: Secretariat to publish the minutes of the November 2004 meeting on Wilton Park's website (para 1).
- b) Wilton Park: To pursue promotional event in Parliament (para 3).
- c) Wilton Park: To analyse the participant ratings for different length and sizes of conferences (para 5).
- d) Wilton Park: Extra question to be added to the conference questionnaire on meeting participants' objectives (para 5).

e) Wilton Park: To convene a meeting of a group of Council members on branding (para 7).

f) Wilton Park: To put the WPAC Annual Report for 2004/5 on the website (para 9).

g) PD Group, FCO: to consult Council members on candidates for membership (para 10).

### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Sir Rodric Braithwaite, Dr David Bryer, Sir Patrick Cormack, Dr Heather Grabbe (who was having to stand down from the Council), Sir David Green, Mr David Heath, Ms Mary Jo Jacobi, Prof Anand Menon, Lord Skidelsky, Tim Livesey and Richard Latter.

### **Item 1: Minutes of the last meeting**

1. The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Council.

### **Item 2: Matters arising**

2. The Chair welcomed Dr Ray Cunningham, Anglo-German Foundation, to his first meeting. Richard Latter was not present because he was chairing a conference. He would be retiring in October and the Council sent its best wishes and thanks to him for his considerable contribution to the work of Wilton Park (WP) over the last 18 years.

3. The Chair confirmed that action points a) and d) had been completed. Mr Jennings said that he had liaised with Ms Jacobi on business involvement at WP. His conclusion was that, rather than holding promotional events for the business world, it would be better to hold 2-3 conferences a year of special interest to business people in partnership with a business organisation or NGO. This model had worked well on financial markets events. On c), WP had deferred consideration of a promotional event in Parliament until after the General Election and hoped to take this forward after the summer. Lord Corbett said that he would take this up with Sir Patrick Cormack. The promotion's aim was to attract more MPs to participate at WP, but senior business people could also be invited to attend the event.

### **Item 3: Chief Executive's Report**

4. The Chief Executive said that the latter period of the FY had been very busy and productive. WP had been driven by demand and financial pressures to do more conferences than originally planned. Participant ratings of programmes were below last year's record levels but were still 55%. WP had now recruited two new Associate Directors, Klaus Becher and Julia Purcell, to provide extra capacity for the future. Participation from the Arab world had increased and WP had done more events on that region. It had been a struggle in the past to get financial support for Arab world conferences

but WP had had more success recently with the FCO and US State Department. In answer to a question on the conference held in Senegal, this had been undertaken at the request of the FCO and UN and the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa (Ould-Abdallah) had encouraged high level West African participation (which had included the Prime Ministers of Senegal and Niger). There had also been good support from the French. Dr Williamson said that there had been clear benefits in holding the conference in Senegal in terms of the level and range of African participation. People had spoken very freely. There had been some logistic difficulties but these had been resolved. Mr Jennings said the core aim of WP events whether held at Wiston House or overseas was the same.

5. Mr Jennings said that the increased US participation had been primarily from government organisations and policy institutions. There had also been more partnerships with US organisations and the US Embassy had been more involved in official US participation. Other issues raised in discussion were:

- Had the ratings for the 2 ½ day conferences been better than for the 3 ½ day ones? Did weekend conferences work? To what extent had WP analysed the difference between a well attended conference and one less well attended? What impact was the cancellation policy likely to have on participation? Mr Jennings said WP needed to look at these points. He planned to approach participants from, say, 7 conferences each year, after 3 months, to get feedback on any outcomes resulting from those conferences.
- It was suggested that WP should also contact, within a week of the event, those participants who had rated a particular conference as "poor" to discuss the reason for their ratings.
- Mr Jennings said that one of the reasons there had been lower ratings overall was because WP had taken the decision not to replace the Associate Director who left in May 2004, but WP had then become stretched financially and thus had to do more conferences with less capacity.
- WP now had extra resources at Associate Director level to do more conferences a year and a new Director of Conferences would be starting at WP in September who had good experience of managing a team. Nick Hopkinson, as Director of Planning and External Relations, would spend more time on raising money and organising the forward calendar. This would release the Chief Executive to concentrate more on fund-raising.
- He said that the cancellation policy did not apply to individual participants but to partner organisations who had committed to back an event but then dropped out.
- Mr Jennings said that the deficit in the last 2 FYs amounted to 2-3% of WP's running costs and should be kept in proportion. To prevent a further deficit in this FY the cost of participation had been increased, especially for shorter conferences. WP also now had end year flexibility from the FCO of up to £200,000, either as a surplus or deficit, that could be carried forward to the next year.

- He agreed that an extra question could be added on whether the conference had met the participant's objectives, and had been a good use of their time, with a rating of 1-5.
- Customers' expectations had risen. Had WP's conference prices been compared to those charged by similar organisations and did WP charge enough? Mr Jennings said that there had been no significant resistance to the current increase in prices, but as WP's clientele were largely government officials, rather than business people, prices could not be dramatically increased.
- Perhaps WP should do less conferences but increase their income by holding some special events with very high level speakers and charge, say, £10,000 to participate. Mr Jennings said Wiston House's location might not attract those people prepared to pay such a price. London was the preferred venue for such events. It would also not meet the FCO's objectives for WP, although one or two such events would certainly help financially. However, despite the deficit, one should remember that it had been a very good year for WP.
- The Chair concluded that WP had had a successful year and should be praised.

#### **Item 4: Forward look from the FCO**

6. Peter Hill, Directorate of Strategy and Information at the FCO, gave a snapshot of some of the key issues likely to be on the FCO's agenda over the coming 18 months.

- **The UK Presidency of the EU** would begin on 1 July and the White Paper had been launched. Debate would start (and probably continue into the next Presidency) to shift the focus to what Europe does well and how it should respond to the problems of globalisation. It was likely that enlargement would be raised in that debate. The UK's priority remained to ensure that the EU kept its commitments, including to open Turkey's accession negotiations on 3 October.
- **The G8 Gleneagles summit** was imminent. It was not yet clear what would come out of the summit, but the FCO was optimistic. The Summit would be important in its own right and in preparation for the UN Millennium summit in September.
- **The Middle East** remained a top priority, in particular Iran, Iraq, the MEPP and reform in the Arab world
- **Rise of Asia:** had been discussed for a long time, but was now clearly recognised as a key issue with implications across the full range of international affairs.
- **Russia:** Relations with Russia and the near abroad in particular would remain a high priority, not least given Russia's G8 Presidency in 2006.

Some other issues on the agenda

- **Conflict:** ensuring we had the right mechanisms for predicting and managing conflict.

- **Energy security:** not least in the context of growing demand from China and India
- **Communicable diseases:** were we sufficiently prepared eg for a serious outbreak of avian flu?
- **The FCO Strategy** would be looked at again shortly – there was unlikely to be much change in the priorities it outlined.

The following comments were made in discussion:

No mention had been made of Syria and Egypt. There had also been a change in US foreign policy – it now promoted democracy, was that a real change or not? How much concern was there in the FCO to get change in the Arab world, and could it be achieved without instability? Mr Hill said the FCO would support reform and modernisation in the Middle East. They recognised it would not be easy, but countries of the region themselves recognised the need for change.

- The Doha round had not been mentioned – it was likely to be significant in the allocation of resources around the world. Also no mention of weapons of mass destruction. North Korea was a bigger issue than Iran. The G8 follow up on Africa would be interesting. Climate change should be discussed in relation to all these issues and not as a separate subject. European issues were more problematic and difficult to resolve than had been suggested. Europe may emerge strong but that was not certain. China should be differentiated from the rest of Asia as it was still an undemocratic country. Mr Hill agreed that the challenges posed by China and India's rise were different.. North Korea was important and the UK and EU supported the 6PT. The UK had a more direct role in negotiations on Iran.
- Had there been any discussion on the possibility of Iraq splitting into 3 countries by 2007? Mr Hill said that despite the tensions and violence there was a firm sense of national identity in Iraq. The Government would continue to seek to make progress in parallel on the political, security and economic tracks.

Mr Jennings said it had been useful to have this discussion and there was a need for WP to discuss the issues further with DSI in relation to its planned conferences next year.

#### **Item 5: Branding of Wilton Park [*paper by WP*]**

6. Mr Jennings said that the paper circulated to the Council set out a number of options, building on discussion at the last meeting. There was much discussion and the following points were made:

- It was argued that there was a need for some external market research. An MBA student might be prepared to do a summer's intern work on this. There was no desire to change WP's product. WP should perhaps run 4 flagship conferences on an annual basis on subjects that would always be of importance worldwide – eg conflict

between the West and Islam or drugs etc. Mr Jennings said that consultants had researched the UK business and charity market for WP last year. This had shown that cultivating the business community was highly labour intensive. He did not think that the business market was important enough for WP to justify spending a lot of time and further money in researching or cultivating it.

- Branding was about profile with new partners as much as with the business community. The brand was still not really defined. There was a need for urgency within WP and its management and not just within the Academic Council.
- Not obvious what the Council meant by branding – was it the purpose of WP itself, or the strategies to serve that purpose, or did it mean how WP marketed itself? If it were just about marketing then someone should be commissioned to look at that. But there was not an evident need to explore strategy and purpose. Mr Jennings agreed. Internally WP had found it useful to have a discussion on its purpose and the impact it had on people – it was less about marketing. WP was clear about what it was doing and was proceeding from a strong base. The marketing problem was with the business sector.
- Profitable companies were always the most difficult ones to perpetuate. Changes have had to be made and WP were managing the problem. However in 5 years time things could be different. It was likely that WP would have to be self-financing and there were capital issues to be discussed. WP needed a strong individual brand now that would take it forward through more challenging times.
- The key part of WP was its reputation. It was perhaps not as well-known as desired. In reality it needed to be driven from within and there needed to be a balance. Reducing the number of its conferences and charging more was not what WP was about. WP needed to keep reinventing itself but that was not easy. WP was strong – but there should be change to the way some sessions were run. Flagship conferences were a good idea.
- It was the responsibility of WP's management team to look at branding and not the Council. The issue was the links between WP and business. A number of major Indian companies were now appearing on the international scene in London. They could be interested in WP's calendar. Success depended on the quality of the conferences and those who participated.
- The Academic Council was only an advisory body and should raise the issues of the effectiveness of speakers, participants and fundraising. The image of the House was not so crucial – the problems started if the sense of WP went wrong. How much were overseas conferences about an extension of capacity at WH or of a brand?
- Some adjustments were needed to the way conferences were run but overseas conferences were very good for WP. They were not a negative for its brand.
- Mr Langdon said that there were 3 major branding consultants in the UK. The FCO needed to decide whether WP was achieving its aims. Branding was essentially about the need to assess what an

organisation thought it did against what its partners and customers thought it achieved.

- The FCO would eventually insist that WP became more sustainable. There was a need to clarify its brand and reach a bigger market. There was not a need for a branding consultancy but for better public relations to make others aware of WP – there was no need to rebrand it.
- Understanding the significance of brand was of way of giving added focus to mission and strategy – perhaps a conference on the effectiveness of conferences was a good idea!

7. Mr Jennings suggested that discussion in a smaller group was needed and the Chair suggested that Mr Heath, Mr Gowing, Professor Bulmer-Thomas, Sir Michael Quinlan and Ms Jacobi should meet separately together with Mr Jennings to discuss the issue further.

**Item 6: Draft Calendar for 2006**

8. Mr Jennings said that the suggestions in the draft calendar included some themes that had never been done before as well as many that had. There would be other conferences in 2006 relating to any issues arising at the time. The Council's suggestions for the calendar for 2006 are at Annex A.

**Item 7: WPAC Annual Report**

9. There was no comment on the text of the draft Annual Report circulated to Council members. It should now be published on the website.

**Item 8: AOB**

10. The Chair said that a number of vacancies had arisen on the Academic Council and the FCO were looking for nominations and the vacancies would be advertised. Mr Jennings said that Public Diplomacy Group at the FCO would be asking all current members for suggestions on new members from the business world, diplomatic world, NGOs, and media and with EU expertise.

11. Mr Jennings said that the current lease of WH expired in March 2007 after 20 years. The FCO were holding a meeting in September in the context of looking again at its own conference facilities as a whole. WP had been asked to make a business case for retaining WH for this meeting. A further factor for lease renewal would be the Gershon Review under which government premises were being moved out of South East England. As a result, any renewal of current government leases on such properties had to be agreed by HM Treasury.

**Item 9:        Date of next meeting**

12.    It was agreed that the winter meeting at the FCO would take place in the week beginning 12 December.    This has now been arranged for **Tuesday 13 December**.

Jane Rawbone

Tel: (01903) 817766

Fax: (01903) 879647

[Jane.Rawbone@wiltonpark.org.uk](mailto:Jane.Rawbone@wiltonpark.org.uk)

5 October 2005

## **ANNEX A**

### **SUMMER MEETING OF WILTON PARK ACADEMIC COUNCIL:**

**THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2005**

#### **Item 6: Draft Calendar for 2006**

The following suggestions or amendments were made on next year's draft calendar:

#### **THE EUROPEAN UNION**

- Some of the titles of suggested conferences, eg "Economic Reform and Governance In Europe: Taking Forward the Lisbon Agenda", should be more punchy eg "Creating Sustainable Employment and Growth in Europe".
- Conferences should be considered on "Reconnecting Europe With Its Citizens"; and on "France". (In 2007 France will probably have a very different President and the agenda should be anticipating this.)
- The prospects for Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia joining the EU by 2007.
- "European Islam".
- "Agriculture in Europe" should include how CAP impacts on international trade and production.

#### **GLOBAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES**

Additional conference themes were suggested on:

- "Stock-take on the condition of international law". Is the International Criminal Court (ICC) working? Ms Jaques commented that international law and human rights had been discussed earlier this year and there had also been a conference on "Transitional Justice" which had included the ICC to some extent. There could be a conference next year which focussed more narrowly on the ICC, or perhaps more broadly on genocide, but there would be a need for conference sponsors. The Woodrow Wilson Foundation was mentioned as a possible sponsor.
- More needed to be done on public diplomacy, eg "Projecting Credible Power in a Connected World"; or "Business, and Civil Society in the Market State"; or "Public Diplomacy and Relationships with the Muslim World".
- "Corruption in the Developing World".
- "How Do Modern Medicine and Complementary Medicine Interlink?"
- "How are the Attitudes of Youth Changing Globally?"

- “Micro-Finance in Developing Countries”.
- A trend in global economic policies towards regionalism and protection of internal markets. Environmental benefits to be gained from a more regional approach.
- “Russia’s G8 Presidency”.
- “United Nations Reform”, especially of the Security Council.

## **KEY REGIONS AND COUNTRIES**

- “Reform in the Palestinian Authority: What needs to be done?”
- On India, would be better to do something on the impact of their vast economic growth on the economies of the developing world rather than one more conference on China.
- How different was the focus of the two conferences on China? “China – The Risks”, might be better worded, “China – New Opportunities, New Risks”.
- The conference on “Africa – Beyond Conflict to Development” did not link up with the forthcoming G8 meeting in July 05: it needed to.
- By 2020 80m jobs would need to be created for 16-25 year olds in the Arab world - a subject for discussion.
- “Arab Stability” - especially in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia important, especially under possible new leadership in 2006.
- China, Brazil and India are going to play a large part in relation to major European economies.
- Zimbabwe.
- “Pakistan 2007” – before the Presidential elections.
- “Cities”.
- A conference on Libya, or perhaps Egypt.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

- “Security of Energy Supplies”.
- The conference on Climate Change did not mention Kyoto. There was only one conference on climate change in 2006 – should be more. Emissions, trading, energy, successor to Kyoto are of interest and Water. “Energy Security and Climate Change” – good idea to get both communities together on this. “Impact of Climate Change in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia”.

## **DEFENCE, SECURITY AND CONFLICT PREVENTION**

- There are no planned conferences on science and technology -stem cell technology could be discussed. Mr Jennings said that WP now had a contact on that subject and hoped to be able to follow it up.
- The titles on “Islamist Terrorism” and Muslim Youth should be changed. A possible alternative to “Countering the Radicalisation of Muslim Youth in Europe” was “Growing Up in Ethnic Communities”.
- Something could be done on security sector reform: the relationship between armed forces and political institutions.

- Two conferences were planned on Nuclear Weapons – too many?  
One larger conference about the “Future of Nuclear Weapons in the World Security Scene” would be better.
- “War on Terror: Are We Winning?”

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